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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR MAY 09, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for May 09, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

EVRENSEL: People of Diyarbakir were reportedly frustrated that PM Erdogan did not talk about the Kurdish issue during his current visit to the province. The daily reported that the businessmen in Diyarbakir, however, were pleased with Erdogan's visit.

OZGUR GUNDEM: DTP Diyarbakir district mayors, who were not allowed to the airport to welcome PM Erdogan the previous day on grounds that they did not list their names, expressed their resentment.

SABAH (GUNEY): Diyarbakir Deputy Governor Erol Ozer said 18,601,000 new Turkish liras have been paid so far to 2759 people who incurred material losses during measures taken to counter terrorism in the southeastern region of Turkey. Applications of 1000 people who wanted to benefit from the law have been rejected because their eligibility conditions were reportedly doubtful.

SABAH (GUNEY): In a conference dubbed "Greater Middle East Project of the U.S. and its Missionary Activities," participants included Iskenderun Mayor Mete Aslan and Dean of the Faculty of Divinity in Ankara's Gazi University. Mayor Aslan cited a news article reporting that participants in a meeting about Hatay province held in neighboring Syria, shouted "Iskenderun, Iskenderun." Aslan further commented, "If we were to claim land from every location that the Turks went to under Ottoman rule, we should first lay claim to Aleppo. Professor Nedim Macit, Dean of Faculty of Divinity, said in his speech that the U.S.'s aims were to decrease the number of Muslims in the world to 640 millions and usurp the under- and over ground riches of those (Muslim) countries. Turkey and Cyprus were also among those countries, said Macit.

RADIKAL / EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM: The trial of 23 children, against whom charges were brought because of their participation in demonstrations in Diyarbakir in late March, started at Diyarbakir Children's Heavy Penalty Court. The children, who faced up to 20 years of imprisonment on grounds that they "breached the codes regulating demonstrations and public gatherings", "damaged public property" and "showed resistance to the police officers." Nine of the 23 children, who have remained under arrest to date, have been released by the court to stand trial later.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The daily pointed out where statements of

defendants in the Semdinli case contradicted their statements to the Turkish parliamentary commission probing Semdinli case.

EVRENSEL: Van State Theater authorities, who initially accepted the application of Egitim-Sen (Union of Teachers) to perform a theater play in Kurdish at one of the state theater halls in Van, told Egitim-Sen members that the halls had been booked for other performances allegedly when theater authorities realized that the play was in Kurdish.

OZGUR GUNDEM / HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): In a local bazaar in Batman, a police officer got into an altercation with a bazaar salesman who allegedly verbally harassed the police officer's wife as she was shopping. The event reportedly caused great panic among people after the police officer reportedly opened fire in the air when other salesmen involved themselves in the altercation. Police allegedly beat the four salesmen as they took them under custody. Meanwhile, during a fight that broke out because of a girl who was abducted in Bitlis's Guroymak district, a person died and ten people were wounded. In an event in a Sanliurfa, 12 people were wounded when two families started a row that turned into a fight.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Democratic Alawi Initiative (DAI) voiced the right to teach Alawi children their own religion and its practices. DAI has also defended the right to conduct Cem rituals also in Kurdish at Alawi worshipping houses.

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA) / OZGUR GUNDEM: Police searched a car in Sanliurfa's Viransehir district and found 33 Glock-brand guns and 26 clips which were illegally brought from northern Iraq. Three people have been detained.

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): One hundred eighty kilograms of marijuana have been found in a moving company truck traveling from Van to Mersin as a result of the concerted efforts of the

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Mersin, Adana, Diyarbakir, Gaziantep and Van Security Directorates.

EKSPRES / BOLGE: Seyhan Municipality's cleaning services workers have launched a strike in Adana reportedly to press demands to win back their social rights.

BOLGE: Mustafa Attaroglu, newly elected chairman of AKP Adana provincial party organization, reportedly said during a press announcement that he would win more votes if former chairman Abdullah Dogru did not withdraw from the race.  
REID